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Letter dated 27 July 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 27 July 1995, addressed to you by H.E. Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 51, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hayati GÜVEN
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 27 July 1995 from
H.E. Mr. Osman Ertuğ

I have the honour to refer to a recent letter, dated 21 July 1995, addressed to you by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Greek Cypriot administration, which was circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/49/948-S/1995/602). The letter in question is a characteristic example of the Greek Cypriot side's continuing attempts to create artificial issues and tensions with a view to diverting attention from its own militarization campaign, which is in high gear with a military spending of about $2 million per day. In doing so, the Greek Cypriot propagandists deal a further blow to prospects for confidence-building between the two communities in Cyprus and a comprehensive solution.

I believe that the answer to the Greek Cypriot side's allegations regarding the children's playground on the Yigitler (Roccas) Bastion in the Turkish Cypriot sector of Nicosia can be found in your letter to the President of the Security Council dated 25 July 1995, in which it is stated that "UNFICYP is of the view that construction on Roccas Bastion to date, including the material used, does not indicate work carried out to normal military specifications, or to any evident military logic". You further indicate that UNFICYP has had access, and will continue to have "unhindered periodic access to the site" during and after the completion of the work.

This confirms the position stated by the Turkish Cypriot side from the beginning that the civilian construction in this locality has no military use or purpose. Therefore, I need not dwell on this matter any further, except to say that, at a time when the international community is grappling with the human tragedy in Bosnia and a host of other serious problems crowding its agenda and when, in Cyprus itself, attention should be focused on building confidence as a first step towards making progress on a comprehensive solution, it is regrettable that the Greek Cypriot side should generate so much ill-intentioned propaganda and waste the time and resources of the United Nations on such a nonsensical issue.

If there is a party in Cyprus increasing its military capability through the so-called "joint military doctrine" (with Greece) and is constructing fortifications or strengthening them along the borders, it is the Greek Cypriot side itself. As stated in paragraph 13 of your most recent report to the Security Council dated 15 June 1995 (S/1995/488), "... the National Guard continued with an extensive programme to strengthen its military positions, or to add new ones, along and behind its cease-fire line opposite all sectors of the buffer zone".

As recently as this week, Mr. Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, has announced that his "Government has decided to carry out military fortification works along the confrontation line", confirming that the work already under way will continue (see the Greek Cypriot daily Eleftherotipia of 24 July 1995).

The militarization campaign in south Cyprus does not stop at building or strengthening fortifications. Paragraph 18 (b) of your above-mentioned report, in which you state that the Greek Cypriot National Guard "has continued its comprehensive programme to upgrade its strength", gives substantial information regarding the manpower and firepower aspects of this campaign. The acquisition of Exocet missiles and plans to purchase a significant number of tanks, armoured personnel carriers and an air-defence system and the recruiting of personnel, including from Greece, with a stated target over five years of an additional 5,000 men, in the context of the joint "Defence Dogma" are among the findings of the report.

The above are in addition to the active strength of 15,000 of the "National Guard" and, additionally, thousands of officers and men from mainland Greece. With the number of paramilitary forces and reservists, the combined strength of the Greek and Greek Cypriot military forces in the south reaches a total of 104,270 according to the latest figures published by the Institute of Strategic Studies. These facts and figures show the fallacy of "the weaker neighbour" argument of the Greek Cypriot Chargé in his aforementioned letter. In view of what the Greek Cypriots are capable of doing, and have done in the past, to their weaker Turkish Cypriot neighbours, such an argument appears the epitome of hypocrisy. In so far as the comparison is with Turkey, I wish to point out that this is simply a wrong comparison.

I would, furthermore, like to remind a deliberately forgetful Greek Cypriot side that, in its apparent attempt to turn this issue into a numbers game, exaggerating the troop strength in the north does not change the fact that it is Turkey's presence as an effective deterrent that has kept the peace in Cyprus in the last 21 years. It is clear from their militarization activities and statements that the Greek Cypriots are trying to upset the existing balance as a prelude to new adventures. Bolstered by their newly acquired military hardware, even the leader of the Greek Cypriot community, Mr. Clerides, has been engaged in some warmongering of his own, by publicly declaring that waging war is an option available to the Greek Cypriot side, thus joining the chorus of Greek Cypriot political, religious and other community leaders who are openly propagating the concept of military action against their Turkish Cypriot neighbours (Greek Cypriot press reports dated 18 July 1995).

As for the exploitation of certain press reports in a Turkish daily, this shows how desperate the Greek Cypriot side is in finding fuel for its propaganda machine. Adding insult to injury, the Greek Cypriot side did not even show the honesty or courtesy of quoting Hürriyet newspaper accurately. It should be pointed out that the correct terminology used by this Turkish mainland daily in describing the Turkish intervention of 20 July 1974 has never been any other than "the Turkish Peace Operation".

In view of the damaging international press coverage that the Greek Cypriot side has had in recent months, it should be no wonder that it is desperately trying to divert the attention of world public opinion from this and from its own militarization activities by resorting to unfounded allegations. It will be recalled that southern Cyprus has recently been the subject of various articles in the international press as a country which, while paying lip service to international law, not only violates sanctions against the Serbs and others, but

also serves as a centre for arms-smuggling, drug-trafficking, money-laundering and other criminal activity. Reputable newspapers such as L'Express of Belgium of 6 April 1995, The Washington Times of 20 May and 20 June 1995, and The New York Times of 15 June 1995 extensively reported on such activity, even linking it directly to some Greek Cypriot officials. In The New York Times article of 15 June 1995, for instance, under the heading "Cyprus Shores Wash Dirty Money", it is reported that "... senior Cypriot politicians and executives have even used their business as fronts for Serbian companies seeking to break the sanctions on Yugoslavia".

In the face of this overwhelming evidence of rampant illegality in southern Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot administration would do well to concentrate its efforts on cleaning its own house. Blaming others, particularly on issues that have no basis in fact, only further poisons the atmosphere between the two communities, making efforts towards a solution all the more difficult.

In this connection, I would also like to emphasize that Mr. Clerides's rejection of the recent call by President Rauf Denktaş for a face-to-face meeting between the two leaders is most regrettable and demonstrates the continued lack of political will on the part of the Greek Cypriot side for a negotiated solution. It is ironic that Mr. Clerides has described such a meeting as "a waste of time", at a moment when his own administration is wasting not only its own time but also that of the international community by its incessant and obsessive slander campaign against Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I would be grateful if this letter is circulated as a document of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 51, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus